

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 8093

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, CG, NI, CU
SUBJECT: MORE COMMENTS FROM NIGERIA ON SHABA CONFLICT

REF: LAGOS 7182, LAGOS 7933

1. IN THE PERIOD SINCE KOLWEZI, ALMOST ALL ELEMENTS
OF THE EMBASSY HAVE RECEIVED COMMENTARY ON NIGERIAN
REACTION TO THE EVENT. AS AN ADDITION TO WHAT HAS
ALREADY BEEN REPORTED, THREE CONVERSATIONS IN WHICH
THE ECON COUNSELOR PARTICIPATED ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW:

2. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR AMEEL, SLATED TO END HIS
ASSIGNMENT HERE IN EARLY JULY, STATED THAT IN MAKING
FAREWELL CALLS TO MEA AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
HE NOTICED MUCH UNIFORMITY IN WHAT WAS SAID. THREE
POINTS WERE REPEATEDLY BROUGHT FORWARD: (A) MOBUTU
WAS BOTH CONTEMPTIBLE AND DANGEROUS. HE HAD NO
INTEGRITY AND LITTLE REAL STRENGTH. AS ZAIRE COULD
EASILY BREAK UP FOR LACK OF A STRONG RULER, IT WOULD
BE BETTER FOR SOMEONE IN THE LUMUMBA TRADITION TO
TAKE THE HELM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. (B) THE CUBANS
WERE PRESSING TOO HARD. IF THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR
SHABA, IT WAS REGRETTABLE. SUCH INTERVENTION SHOULD
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NOT BE ENCOURAGED. (C) FRANCE HAD CLEARLY BECOME THE
LEADING INTERVENTIONIST IN AFRICA, REPEATEDLY IN-
VOLVING ITSELF WHERE IT SHOULD NOT GO. THE PROBLEM
WAS AGGRAVATED BY THE SUPPORT OF MOST FORMER FRENCH
COLONIES. THESE "NEOCOLONIALIST" COUNTRIES WERE
STOOGES FOR THE FRENCH AND MUST BE TREATED AS SUCH.
AMEEL EXPECTED A BLAST AT BELGIUM FOR ITS KOLWEZI

ROLE BUT ENCOUNTERED NO CRITICISM.

3. A BLACK AMERICAN BUSINESS EXECUTIVE, A SELLER OF AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT WHO HAS APPARENTLY GAINED THE FRIENDSHIP OF ARMY LEADERS (INCLUDING FULL-TIME USE OF ARMY SEDAN AND DRIVER) REPORTED VERY HOSTILE FEELINGS TOWARDS U.S. AT SMALL DINNER HOSTED BY DANJUMA ON MAY 30. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, GUESTS WHICH INCLUDED GUARDS BRIGADE COMMANDER VATSA, FOURTH DIVISION COMMANDER WUSHISI, AND MEA COMMISSIONER GARBA, WERE DISMAYED AND ANGRY OVER U.S. AERIAL SUPPORT OF A "FLAGRANT INVASION". ANALOGY MADE BY GUESTS WAS THAT AERIAL DROP ON KOLWEZI WAS SIMILAR TO U.S. MARINES BEING PARACHUTED ON LAGOS' KIRI-KIRI PRISON TO LIBERATE EXPATRIATE PRISONERS THERE. DIMENSIONS OF KOLWEZI INTERVENTION WERE COMPLETELY OUT OF PROPORTION TO FIGHTING THERE. IF 100 WHITES WERE ABUSED IN A BLACK-RULED COUNTRY, THE FURY OF THE WHOLE WEST WOULD BE VENTED. IF 600 BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA WERE ERADICATED, THE WEST WOULD SHRUG. IN SHABA A HUGE FORCE HAD DESCENDED TO "CRUSH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE" FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS. AMERICAN AIRPOWER HAD MADE IT POSSIBLE. THE WEST'S MILITARY INCURSION WAS WRONG BUT AS A NATO ACTION, SUCH EVENTS WOULD ALWAYS BE SUPPORTED BY THE U.S. DANJUMA EMPHASIZED HIS OWN FEAR THAT THE U.S. WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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ON THE VERGE OF AGAIN GETTING INVOLVED IN ANGOLA. THE ARMY SPOKESMEN OPINED THAT THE SHABA ACTION WOULD PROBABLY NOT PROPEL NIGERIA ANY CLOSER TO THE SOVIET UNION BUT IT DID RAISE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE FMG SHOULD DRAW CLOSER TO THE CHINESE.

4. PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR PROENCA REPORTED HIS OWN CONVICTION THAT CUBA WAS UP TO ITS NECK IN FOMENTING TROUBLE IN SHABA. AS AN ILLUSTRATION, HE CITED A MAY 21 LUNCHEON GIVEN BY THE VENEZULEAN AMBASSADOR IN LAGOS FOR THE NEW CUBAN AMBASSADOR. PROENCA AND THE MEXICAN AMBASSADOR WERE INVITED. IN THE POST-LUNCHEON CONVERSATION, THE CUBAN DELARED THAT HIS COUNTRY WAS VIGOROUSLY FOLLOWING THE TRADITION OF CHE GUEVARA. THE U.S. WAS "THE ENEMY" AND CUBA WAS INTENT ON "ATTACKING U.S. INTERESTS WHEREEVER THEY COULD BE FOUND".
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